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TO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2822
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6955
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RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA 7198
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 5983
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 5337
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0970
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 8543
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 9940
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 1659
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 3045
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 074872

SIPDIS
GENEVA FOR RMA
BRUSSELS/LONDON/PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS
USEU FOR FRANCIS
ADDIS/JERUSALEM FOR REFCOORDS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2018
TAGS: [PREF PHUM PREL EG ER SU IS LY](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT: HEADING OFF FORCIBLE RETURNS OF ASYLUM
SEEKERS AND ADDRESSING ISSUE OF AFRICAN MIGRANTS/ASYLUM
SEEKERS

REF: A. (A) CAIRO 1316 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. (B) STATE 67937 (NOTAL)
[1](#)C. (C) CAIRO 1388 (NOTAL)
[1](#)D. (D) STATE 31973 (NOTAL)

Classified By: PRM/AFR DIRECTOR MCKELVEY FOR REASONS 1.4(B AND D)

State of Play

[1](#)1. (C) Neither Embassy Cairo's repeated demarches on the Egyptian Government to allow UNHCR access to Eritrean asylum seekers and to urge no deportations to Eritrea given threats to safety and life of returned asylum seekers nor U.S. Delegation's intervention calling for same at the UNHCR (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) July Standing Committee meeting have produced positive results. Moreover, the irregular movements of African asylum seekers and migrants seeking to cross from Egypt into Israel continue to result in deaths of migrants/asylum seekers at the hands of Egyptian border guards -- and even recently in the death of a border guard reportedly at the hands of Bedouin smugglers. Egyptian authorities continue to express a preference for dealing with UNHCR/Geneva and/or IOM (International Organization for Migration) with regard to African asylum seekers.

[1](#)2. (C) While bemoaning an alleged lack of international offers to resettle some of the refugees/asylum seekers to share the burden with Egypt -- N.B. State/PRM has reiterated that the USG is willing to consider any UNHCR resettlement referrals (ref B) -- Egyptian authorities are nonetheless undecided as to whether they think a push for resettlement would create a magnet for still more asylum seekers.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Israel, as a destination country for economic migrants and asylum seekers and as a refugee host, is also a piece of the regional puzzle since Israel has been pressing Egypt to control its border with Israel and has been struggling with how to deal with the growing number of African asylum seekers.

Action Request

14. (C) Mission is requested to again engage UNHCR/MENA Head Nouicer, UNHCR/DIP Okoth-Obbo (and or ASG Feller), and IOM/Geneva on working more urgently with Egypt to suspend deportations of Eritreans, to put in place a better framework for addressing the protection of asylum seekers in Egypt, and to coordinate cooperation between Israel and Egypt on the issue of asylum seekers and migrants. (Note: We would see more robust action on the voluntary repatriation of southern Sudanese who have had formal or informal asylum in Egypt as a part of improving the framework. End note.) PRM/Washington would be prepared to do a conference call with Mission and UNHCR and IOM (individually or jointly) if Mission would deem that helpful.
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